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—



“ THE WAITING ISLES.”

A

S E R M O N

PREACHED AT THE

Farewell Service

OF THE

MISSION TO THE SANDWICH ISLANDS,

IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY,

JULY 23, 1862.

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BY THE RIGHT REV.

THE BISHOP OF HONOLULU.

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A

S E R M O N,

§c.

ISAIAH xlvi. 4.

“The isles shall wait for His law.”

By that “Law” for which in the vision of the prophet the isles were to wait must be understood the revelation of love and mercy set forth to the world in the incarnation, sufferings, death, and exaltation of the Divine Redeemer, carried on in its progress towards completion, and rendered effectual to the individual soul, by the Holy Spirit in the Church. It implies at once the inward spiritual agency described by our Lord as a “kingdom within us,” and what must ever be its outward expression and embodiment,—the kingdom of Christ visible here on earth, His Mystical Body, the blessed company of all faithful people, His Holy Catholic Church.

This is that new dispensation for which the Apostle Paul declared to the Romans “the whole creation was groaning and travailing in pain to-

gether." In all her supernatural aids, through all her sacramental gifts, the virtue of the great Mystery of the Incarnation is seen flowing into humanity, raising what was before base and defiled to become again sanctified and fit for the Master's use, worthy of Him who created it. So that in waiting for His Law the isles, that is, the whole Gentile world, were in very truth "waiting for the adoption," to wit, the "redemption of the body."

And often has this waiting been illustrated in the history of the Church generally, and of our own in particular. The known readiness of King Ethelbert to hear the Gospel, no less than the sight of the Saxon boys in the market-place at Rome, seems to have moved Gregory the Great in sending Augustine over to evangelize the kingdom of Kent. In that of Northumbria, too, was there not an evident waiting for the Gospel message, when before the arrival of Paulinus the Angles there rose up and destroyed their existing idols, their high priest himself taking the lead, and asserting his belief that "the wooden images hitherto worshipped were no gods at all," for that "there was only one Supreme Being dwelling in the heavens?"

The whole history of that far-distant group of islands with which we are concerned is an exemplification of the prediction, "The isles shall wait for His law."

After their discovery by Cook in 1778 sailors and traders seem frequently to have touched at

their shores. These men, chiefly English or Americans, themselves of licentious and abandoned habits, coming into contact with a highly sensualized people, no doubt diffused among them a fearful amount of vice. At the same time such an intercourse could not be carried on without the natives growing in civilization and enlightenment. Two men, John Young and Isaac Davies, the former a Liverpool shipwright, fell into the hands of the chief of Hawaii—one who had an intense wish to raise his people to the level of those strangers who, he saw, were so far beyond himself in the power which superior knowledge always gives. They took up their permanent abode with him, and became his chief advisers. Dissatisfaction ere long sprung up in the mind of Kamehameha,—for that was the name of the chieftain,—with the then existing religious system, and when Vancouver, after repeated visits to the islands during several years, finally took leave of them in 1794, he begged the captain to procure teachers from England to instruct his people in the faith of Christ. That unhappily was not a missionary age. It was a time of unreality and spiritual deadness in the Church of England: “the love of many had waxed cold;” and it is not therefore to be wondered at, though sadly to be regretted, that such an opportunity was lost. Had it been seized, how different from the actual one might have been the religious history of the various archipelagoes of the Pacific! Instead

of owing whatever of Christianity they do possess to communions we believe, to say the least, far less likely than our own to deal successfully with the native character, they might have been among the most glorious trophies of our Church's conquests, and from this group as a centre might have penetrated into many a dark corner of that ocean—and even among the Indians of Vancouver's Island and British Columbia—the rays of the blessed Gospel of the Son of God! The request was renewed again when another English captain visited the islands in the years 1804—1806¹. He describes the state of civilization which even then this old chief and his people were fast attaining, and the openings presented for the introduction of Christianity among them. That blessed gift was not to be obtained, however, from this country. After the death of Kamehameha, still in a state of heathenism and unbaptized, we find his successor Rihoriho issued an edict abolishing idolatry and the old religion. This met with some opposition; a battle was fought, but victory proved on the side of the reforming party. And it was when the way had been thus remarkably prepared that some Congregationalist Missionaries visited them from the United States of America. They were not permitted to land till the king had assured himself by consultation with Mr. Young that they would speak of the same God and Saviour as the English missionaries, whom they had been in vain

¹ Captain Turnbull.

expecting for the quarter of a century, which had then elapsed since the petition made to Vancouver. Christianity under this form made rapid progress among the people. Rihoriho and his queen came over to England in the year 1823, and, it will be remembered, died in London. The accounts of his visit mention how the royal party attended the services of Westminster Abbey, "with which they were much pleased. The music affected them a good deal, and they were impressed with veneration for the place²." Was it not this which prompted the touching application he is stated to have made to King George the Fourth before his death, "I have to ask your Majesty to send missionaries to teach my people the Protestant religion as taught in the Church of England?" He probably longed to transplant in his own country some reproduction, however inadequate it might be, of the solemn and beautiful worship he had attended within these venerable walls.

May we not regard the series of applications which have reached our Church from these islands during seventy years or more, as a significant commentary on the prophet's words, "The isles shall wait for Thy law?"

And now in more recent times, when the group has assumed an importance it had not before, when the development of its productions with various

² Hulbert's Royal Biography, Memoirs of the Kings Kamehameha I. and II.

forms of trade has collected in Honolulu a foreign population, when a system of national education has brought the Hawaiian into a comparatively advanced state of civilization, when, too, Christianity, in the form of Congregationalism or the Roman Church, has become nominally the religion of the islands, the cry for help has again reached our shores, and this time has not been heard in vain.

The circumstances of the origin of the mission are too well known to need any detail of them on the present occasion. Nor need I remind you of several features in the work itself not without interest to the Church generally: how that we have here the first instance of our Reformed Church being invited by an independent sovereign to plant itself in his dominions; how, too, by the formation of this new diocese the only link is supplied which was wanting to make the girdle of her influence encircle the globe. By that of Melanesia in the South, and that of Honolulu in the North Pacific, the space between Bishop Selwyn's province of New Zealand and the diocese of Bishop Hills in Columbia is bridged over, and we may fain hope that in many an isle of that vast ocean, but yesterday, perhaps, the home of savages and cannibals, the voice of our Zion shall be heard on high, and there, as here, she shall speak in accents that bring hope, and trust, and peace, and joy, to untold thousands. Happy shall I be should it be

my lot to meet in some central isle of the Pacific my brother, the Bishop of Melanesia; happy if there we may hold refreshing intercourse on the progress of our great work, and kneeling down on the sea-shore together, offer up a prayer for God's blessing on our efforts for the extension of His kingdom.

It is, however, rather on the nature and objects of the work to be done, than on its general aspects I ought now to dwell.

First, then, as regards the native population. We shall have to remind them of those Divine truths, which have been hitherto sadly overlooked in the system of Christianity familiar to them; that by His Incarnation the Son of God has made Himself one with them, entered into all their sufferings, temptations, and joys; that in Him all manly, all tender graces combine; that the more they grow into His image, the purer, the braver, the truer, the more loving will they become; that religion was never designed to make their innocent pleasures the less³; that it is com-

³ The want of this teaching is described in the following extract from the "Polynesian Gazette," Honolulu, April 26th, 1862:—

"BONFIRE.—On Monday evening last, a number of the German residents, in commemoration of an ancient custom in their 'Vaterland,' which they were prevented by rain on the evening of Easter Sunday last from performing, lit a large and splendid bonfire, preceded by rockets and fireworks, on one of the spurs of Punchbowl Hill.

patible with the free indulgence in all manly and athletic exercises, being not designed to crush their

“ We would like to see several of the good ancient continental customs revived here upon great festival occasions. Surely religion is not all psalm-singing and gloom. While the heavy of heart and the unforgiven are welcome to groan and lament that over their souls no gladness and light have arisen, yet we would like to see merriment and rejoicing, in those whose spirits are so attuned, exhibit themselves especially on those great Christian occasions so eminently calculated to invite the mind to joy, thanksgiving, and gladness, such as Christmas Day, Easter Sunday, and Ascension Day. We notice that this land is said to have been converted to Christianity, and yet the most remarkable events in the life of the Founder of that faith are not commemorated by the people ; are, on the contrary, studiously ignored by their teachers, who thus forego one of the greatest elements of rendering that religion national as well as rational ; ingrafting it upon the customs of the people from earliest childhood, rich in many bright memories from the morning of life, to which the soul may look back and gather fresh courage from them, when rocked by the tempest and prostrate by woe, and which, in all ages, have softened the manners and opened the heart, by the intermingling of all classes for one common object, and that a lofty and holy one. But independently of religious festivals, why should not a properly national one of domestic origin be revived or instituted ? We would like to see some of the old-world secular festivals introduced, such as ‘ May Day ’ for instance, to be celebrated with national sports, jubilee, and bonfires through every village and hamlet in the country. Were this properly taken in hand, it could not fail of the best results. As it now is, the nation, as such, has no festival either religious or social, but gropes in the ashes of the past for some stray ember of a half-forgotten ‘ mele,’ which it chaunts with fear and trembling, lest its sound may provoke the ban of the preacher or the rebuke of religious martinets.

“ Such were our reflections on seeing the bonfire on Monday last, and we turned away in sadness.”

natural instincts, nor to form, as unhappily all admit it has hitherto done, a sort of crust around and external to their daily life, but rather to work with those instincts and hallow that daily life; that the bodies of Christians are become temples of the Holy Ghost, and that “whoso defileth the temple of God, him shall God destroy;” that He is honoured by the consecration of all that is beautiful in nature and art to the worship of the Sanctuary; that it is as we seek to realize Him in all the duly-appointed channels of grace we may expect to hold “communion with the Father and the Son through the Spirit.” By the blessing of God upon the inculcation of these principles, and by giving them practical effect in the organization and discipline of the Church, we may hope for the elevation of the native races to a higher and purer ideal of their manhood. All who visit the islands bear testimony to the sad want of any thing like moral purity among them⁴, in part due to the sensuality engendered by their luxurious climate, in part to the licentiousness of European sailors and traders⁵.

In touching accents the king lately complained to his Legislature:—“Our acts are vain unless we can stay the wasting hand that is destroying our people. I feel a heavy responsibility in this matter.” He has accordingly suggested the institution of

⁴ See Tilly’s “Voyage at the mouth of the Amoor and in the Pacific;” Hill’s “Tour in the Sandwich Isles;” Mr. Manley Hopkins’s “Hawaii,” &c. &c.

⁵ See Extracts from the King’s Speeches, Appendix A.

boarding-schools for the education of native girls, taking them from home at an early age, and raising them by the training of Christian ladies to a higher appreciation of their dignity as women. The Sisters of the Sacred Heart have opened such schools in connexion with the Roman Church, and defective indeed will be our machinery if no provision is made by us for furthering the same object in ways consonant with the practice and distinctive character of the English Church. I am certain that devoted women can be found to engage in this work, if only funds are forthcoming. It is to me a matter of thankfulness that there are in our party going out those who, having devoted the best part of their lives to labour of this kind, are eminently fitted to organize and superintend institutions such as those proposed to be established. Without this instrumentality we shall be indeed shorn of half our strength. Rome will continue her onward progress, for when does that corrupt Church win men's hearts more effectually than when seen in the gentle ministrations of self-denying women? Those ministrations, though directed nominally to the removal of moral and physical evil, are ever found to end in proselytizing to that communion, without the pale of which they believe there is no salvation. How deeply the king feels the want of such agency appears from his speech at the last opening of his Legislature:—"I regret that there has been but small progress in the institution of schools for the

education and moral training of females. This subject ought to be considered paramount to any other in considering the educational necessities of the people. I therefore hope that this Legislature will devise some means for more fully carrying out my views expressed in my address upon this subject to the last Legislature, and in connexion therewith, I cannot forego the opportunity, as the head of this nation, to express my acknowledgments and appreciation of the services already rendered to this cause, either by individuals or organizations."

As an English Mission, it is hoped, we may render valuable aid to the cause of primary education in the islands. It is in contemplation to give a more industrial and practical character to the system pursued in the State Schools, and gradually to bring about a displacement of the Hawaiian for the English tongue throughout the native population. How inadequate the old language is as a vehicle of thought or moral training appears from the fact that there are no words in it whereby to express hope, gratitude, or chastity. In the address, quoted before, the king says, "The importance of substituting English for Hawaiian schools I have already earnestly recommended; and in again bringing the subject under your attention, I would touch upon a matter which I think of equal importance, and that is the raising the standard of elementary education in the Common

Schools. This latter object may be secured by the institution of Normal Schools, as recommended by the President; but combined with the teaching of the English as a general thing throughout the kingdom, it must place the object beyond a per-adventure."

The foreigners centred there for the purposes of trade and agriculture, chiefly English and Americans, containing many professedly members of our Reformed Church or others who are willing to unite with her, though in the absence of any other alternative they have chosen, it may be, one or other of the extreme forms at present in the islands, will have to be tended and fed with Christ's holy Word and Sacraments. Especial attention must be paid to the spiritual wants of the sailors, who, during their stay in the ports visited, so often run into evil, through want of any interest being taken by those around them in their temporal or spiritual welfare.

Lastly, among the heathen islands we may operate from Honolulu as a base. There is no reason why we should not have a college, where the Hawaiians may be trained to go out as missionaries to Micronesia, including the Caroline and other groups towards Japan, as well as to Southern Polynesia. Their language, physical temperament, and general similarity of race, would well qualify them for this work; and that they

are capable of it appears from the fact that the Congregationalists have sent out already six natives as missionaries into Micronesia ⁶.

Such, brethren, are the chief outlines of the task we are undertaking. I cannot hide the fact that its accomplishment seems beset with difficulties and perils. If the ground were wholly unoccupied, as it was when we were first invited to take possession of it in Christ's name, the case would be very different from what it actually is. It is hoped that the introduction of that pure and complete development of Divine truth it is our happiness as English Churchmen to enjoy, concentrating in its worship and teaching all that is good, and beautiful, and true, in the two extremes, without running into the excesses of either, may dispel some of those doubts, which systems, so antagonistic as those now at work there, must have created in their minds. It may be so; but it may produce the contrary effect. And a vast responsibility devolves on those to whom is entrusted the direction of this sacred enterprise, to see that the former, and not the latter, be the result of their efforts. Nothing would shake all religious belief in the islands more effectually than for us to assume an attitude of hostility to those forms of Christianity with which they are now familiar. We must show the people how beneath the defects and corruptions of this or that communion there

⁶ See the religious periodical of the Congregationalists, published at Honolulu in 1860, called "The Friend."

lies a substratum of truth in the admission of the great historic facts of the Creeds, which may well increase their faith in those facts, and lead to greater charity and forbearance in our treatment of those Articles of the Faith which are called in question. We are to speak the truth, but it must be in love; and we are to give all who have been hitherto labouring with so much devotion and earnestness in their Master's cause, while we have been looking on with cold indifference, the credit they deserve. We must make it clear we do not go forth to ignore or override what has been done by others.

And this suggests another danger, that of seeking to proselytize. It is an admitted fact that a large number of the people are in active communion with none of the existing bodies, and among them we must seek to labour, not doubting that, as we thus exhibit and carry to them the Church's message in all fidelity, and zeal, and love, she will attract many others, whom she would effectually repel were she to assume a posture of unfriendliness or aggression. If we keep before our eyes the fact, that the great object of the mission is the salvation of the souls and bodies of those among whom we are going to labour, and not the numbers we can count as members of our communion, we may hope, by God's blessing, to escape this danger.

In the complex character of the population, we

may see another ground for the exercise of prudence and caution. An adaptation of the formularies and system of the Church to the feelings and requirements of any one element may prove very unsuitable and mischievous in the instance of another.

In the national jealousies, too, which usually prevail in a centre of resort such as this,—one owing its independence to the forbearance and protection of its more powerful neighbours,—we have reason for care and circumspection.

But if the difficulties to be apprehended are great, so too are our encouragements. “Not by power or might, but my Spirit, saith our God.” And to the end of time the promise given by our Lord to His Apostles shall be true in the instance of their successors, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” There are also considerations subordinate to this. The interest felt by the present very intelligent, high-principled, and even accomplished king in the realization of an English episcopate, the clinging on the part of the islanders from the first to England as the country to supply them with a religion they could trust, the co-operation of the English and many of the American residents in preparing for the reception of the mission⁷, the baptism of the Prince of Hawaii,

⁷ The “Polynesian” of April 19th last describes a meeting which took place with this object in the Court House, the King taking a part in the proceedings. A committee was

our own beloved Queen standing, by proxy, as the sponsor, with which ceremony the Church will, so to speak, be inaugurated—these are all hopeful signs. When, too, I consider the warm sympathy and support extended to the Mission by my countrymen and fellow-churchmen during the months that have elapsed since my consecration,—shown by their liberal contributions no less than in the hearty prayers they have ever been ready to offer for its success,—there is indeed reason “to be of good cheer and take courage.” For those loving tokens of interest and sympathy how can I ever be grateful enough ?

And now, on the eve of departure with those brethren who have thrown in their lot with me, and are devoting themselves to this arduous enterprise, I have to ask you, on their behalf as well as my own, a continuance of your Christian sympathy and your prayers. You will follow with interest and, when such help may be needed, further with your alms the work of building up the walls of our Zion, as it progresses, in these central isles of the Pacific. You will remember us in your private devotions, your litanies and common prayers, among those that travel by land or by water, that they who go forth to “sow the seed of eternal life beside all waters” may be safe in the Everlasting Arms; but especially that they may be endued with “the

formed to obtain donations for the Cathedral and Mission Funds, and nearly 1000*l.* was promised to the former object.

Spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind," that the great work, they are engaged in, may not be marred by human corruption or by the infirmity of those to whom it is committed, that many an islander of the Pacific, now waiting for Christ's law in grateful adoration for benefits received from this mission of our Church, may hereafter rise up and call Her Blessed.

APPENDIX.

(A.)

AT a recent opening of his Chambers, the King addressed the following impromptu remarks in English to foreigners residing in his dominions :—

“ To be kind and generous to the foreigner, to confide and trust in him, is no new thing in the history of our race; it is an inheritance derived to us from our forefathers; and I say to the foreigner he is welcome to our shores, so long as he comes with the laudable object of promoting his own interests and respecting those of his neighbour; but if he comes with no more exalted motive than to build them up at the expense of the native, to seek our confidence only to betray it, then is he most unwelcome.”

On the institution of the Agricultural Society, the King described the climate and its effect on the Hawaiian character :—

“ Whoever heard of winter on our shores? When was it so cold the labourer could not go to his field? These difficulties have no place in our beautiful group, which rests on the swelling bosom of the Pacific like a water-lily.”

He then reproaches them for not making the most of their advantages :—

“ The great faults of the Hawaiians are laziness and want of perseverance. It is a matter for our shame; but as a father to my people, I cannot hide the fact.”

(B.)

THE CHURCH IN THE NORTH PACIFIC.

THE following statement was issued soon after the Mission was originated, and contains an outline of the principal facts connected with it:—

“The Hawaiian Islands, lying nearly twenty degrees north of the Equator, and nearly midway between the coast of America and the east of Asia, were discovered by Captain Cook, who perished there in 1779. They contain a people of noble physique, gentle disposition, and a remarkable aptitude for civilization, towards which they are advancing with rapid steps.

“Honolulu, the capital, possesses a fine harbour, and has become the resting-place of the commerce now finding its path across the Pacific between the Old and New Worlds. Some hundreds of ships resort to this and other ports of the group during the course of the year. Intermixed with the natives is a large number of English, American, and other foreign residents.

“The government is a constitutional monarchy, under the guaranteed protection of England, France, and the United States. Order and justice are enforced, and education promoted, while English is fast displacing the native tongue.

“After the temporary cession of Hawaii by King Kamehameha I. and his chiefs to the British Sovereign through Vancouver, in 1794, they begged the captain to procure for them on his return English clergymen to instruct them in the Christian faith. Vancouver pressed their petition on Mr. Pitt, but nothing was done. Meanwhile the way was remarkably opened among these islanders for the introduction of the Gospel by their spontaneous abandonment of idolatry in 1819.

“After waiting in vain for a quarter of a century the fulfilment of Vancouver’s promise, some Congregationalist mis-

sionaries from America¹ arrived in 1820. They preached, established schools, and laboured with much success. At the present time they have places of worship erected in many parts of the islands.

“A French Roman Catholic mission was finally introduced in 1839. It is presided over by a Vicar Apostolic, titular Bishop of Arathia. The natives are gradually passing over into its communion, and it is certain that Rome will, ere long, be firmly seated in this ‘Heart of the Pacific,’ if we again refuse as we have done to supply it with the formidable bulwark of our own Scriptural Church.

“In 1844, 1847, 1851, and 1858, attempts were made, chiefly on the part of the English and other residents, to obtain Episcopal clergymen at Honolulu, but without success.

“This year the King wrote himself on the subject to Her Majesty the Queen, and by his minister to the Primate, expressing not only his own earnest wishes, but those of many of the principal residents. He offers to the mission such income as the limited means of the islands will afford, and will probably appropriate a larger portion of land to its future support.

“There are several features of peculiar interest in this movement. 1. We have the only instance of our Church being invited by an independent sovereign to plant itself in his dominions. 2. This invitation is the renewal of other urgent appeals sent us before, and unhappily without effect. 3. England’s daughter Church of America desires to unite with us in this work. 4. The Hawaiian Isles are the key to many other groups in the North and South-east Pacific, as yet belonging to no missionary diocese, and still heathen.

“The Committee contemplate sending out with the Bishop two or three clergy, to be joined by others from the American Church. The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge has granted 200*l.* per annum for five years, and that for the Propagation of the Gospel 300*l.* for each of three years, towards this

¹ It is a mistake to suppose the London Missionary or any *English Association* has done any thing for the Christianizing of these islands, as they have in the case of the groups of the *South Pacific*.

object. But this with the local resources expected in the islands will prove inadequate at first for the proper and effective organization of the mission. Funds will be required, (1) in order to erect a suitable Church, School, and Clergy-house in Honolulu, and Mission Chapels in Lahaina, Hilo, and other towns scattered through the group; (2) to meet the grants of the societies in aid of the stipends of the clergy, &c.

“It is hoped that in a few years, by aid of the local resources in the islands, the Church will become self-supporting. Meanwhile an appeal is with confidence made to the liberality of earnest-minded Churchmen at home.

“Do we not owe these islanders some reparation for having so long passed by unheeded their cry of ‘Come over and help us?’ Shall we not, late though it be, go forth and plant among them an offshoot from that sacred vine which, in our own highly favoured land, God has made so strong for His own self?

“T. N. HONOLULU.”

THE END.









